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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2194
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3074
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1370
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3417
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2803
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000471

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: HEAD OF KYRGYZSTAN'S PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT
TALKS ABOUT ELECTION CAMPAIGN, RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

REF: A. BISHKEK 458

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 286

BISHKEK 00000471 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Acting DCM Robert G. Burgess, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Presidential Secretariat Chief Oksana Malevannaya briefed Staffdel Helwig and Embassy interlocutors May 7 about the Secretariat's outreach to civil society and the need for greater "openness" between the President and the people of Kyrgyzstan. She claimed the draft NGO law would not pass in its current form, and lamented the current state of the Kyrgyz media. Malevannaya described various election-related developments, indicating the Secretariat's close interest in the July 23 Presidential election. Officially established on the last day of 2008, the Secretariat appears to be playing a very public role in trying to change the face of the Presidential Administration.
End Summary.

Civil Society and the NGO Law

[1](#)2. (C) Oksana Malevannaya, chief of the Presidential Secretariat in the Kyrgyz White House, briefed Embassy and visiting U.S. Helsinki Commission Staffdel Helwig (ref A) May 7 on the Secretariat's mission. (Note: Officially established by Presidential decree on December 31, 2008, the Secretariat is reportedly the brainchild of former Presidential Chief of Staff Medet Sadyrkulov. End Note.) Malevannaya said the Secretariat would focus on changing the relationship between the Presidential Administration and civil society, to include the opposition. She said that the government largely functioned under an outdated Soviet model, and there was a need for greater openness between the president and the people.

[1](#)3. (C) Labeling a recent meeting between President Bakiyev and the NGO community a step forward, Malevannaya indicated additional meetings with civil society would be scheduled after the July 23 Presidential election. She admitted there

were concerns about the activities of certain NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, but stated that the Secretariat opposed draft legislation that would prohibit NGOs from participating in "political activity." Malevannaya agreed that the current version of the legislation would be a significant blow against the NGO community in Kyrgyzstan, which she considered to be "well-developed." She said that President Bakiyev also opposed the draft law, but added that his inner circle supported it. Malevannaya believed that the pro-Presidential Ak Jol party's Parliamentary faction would not endorse the current version of the legislation.

Secretariat's Role in the July 23 Election

14. (C) Malevannaya claimed that the Secretariat, as a state body, would not be directly involved in the July 23 Presidential election. However, she said that President Bakiyev's press secretary, who falls within the Secretariat, would take a month of unpaid leave to support Bakiyev's re-election campaign. Malevannaya added that the Secretariat would reach out to the local election authorities to ensure that election boards operated more effectively than in years past. She informed that the Central Election Committee had met recently to draft recommendations for the conduct of the July 23 election, and those recommendations would soon be made public. The goal, Malevannaya explained, was to ensure that international organizations would view the election results favorably, and she added that organizations such as OSCE would be invited to observe the election.

The Kyrgyz Media

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15. (C) Reflecting on her previous work in the television industry, Malevannaya lamented Kyrgyzstan's media industry, noting that it lacked the standards used in the United States or Russia. In response to recent violent attacks on journalists, Malevannaya doubted the veracity of the attacks and suggested the journalists wanted attention or justification for asylum claims. Malevannaya was especially critical of Syrgak Abdyldayev, a journalist who was attacked in March 2009, claiming that he had exaggerated the seriousness and motivation behind his attack (see ref B). Malevannaya said local media relied largely on rumor and secret sources. Malevannaya claimed credit for Bakiyev's March 5 interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Secretariat Continues Outreach

16. (SBU) On May 14, the Secretariat held a roundtable meeting with international organizations, including USAID, OSCE, European Commission, Soros, UN -- and NDI, IRI, Freedom House, and Internews. Representatives from the Secretariat explained that they wanted to introduce themselves, describe their mission, and establish a dialogue. They clarified that the Secretariat is not part of the Presidential Administration, but it is directly under the supervision of the President. Malevannaya said that Bakiyev's victory in the July election was a foregone conclusion, which led to a spirited discussion about whether the election would be free and fair. At the end, Malevannaya suggested holding another meeting in early June to talk specifically about the election -- with future meetings focused on other issues, such as refugees, the media law, and so forth.

Comment

17. (C) Despite the claim that the Secretariat, as a state body, would not be involved directly in the July Presidential election, it was clear that the Secretariat and its staff members will play some role overseeing electoral

preparations. However, it is encouraging that the Secretariat is reaching out to local NGOs and the international community to establish dialogue over issues of concern.

18. (U) Staffdel Helwig did not have an opportunity to clear on this cable.
GFOELLER